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Human resources management

Mobility

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the reports of the Secretary-General on mobility (A/72/767 and A/73/372/Add.2). During its consideration of the reports, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 18 October 2018.

2. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in its resolution 68/265, approved the refined managed mobility framework and requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly annual reports on mobility until its seventy-second session and a five-year comprehensive review of the mobility framework at its seventy-third session. Document A/72/767 is the fourth annual progress report of the Secretary-General and was submitted to the Assembly at its seventy-second session, on 27 February 2018. The report of the Secretary-General (A/73/372/Add.2) contains information on the comprehensive review requested by the Assembly for its seventy-third session and was submitted on 10 September 2018. The Committee notes that the fourth annual progress report, submitted for the seventy-second session, is being taken up concurrently with the report submitted for the seventy-third session.

Background

3. In its resolution 68/265, the General Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to implement the refined mobility framework with a view to commencing mobility for one job network in 2016 and one in 2017, followed by two job networks each year thereafter.[1] The Secretary-General indicates that subsequently the first job network, the Political, Peace and Humanitarian Network (POLNET), was launched in 2016 and the second job network, the Information and Telecommunication Technology Network (ITECNET), was implemented in 2017 (see A/72/767, para. 4). The new staff selection and managed mobility system was operationalized on 1 January 2016 through the promulgation of three new Secretary-General's bulletins and a related

[1] To facilitate functional mobility, the previous eight job networks were reconfigured into nine in 2015 before the launch of the mobility framework (see A/70/254, para. 8 and annex I).

new administrative instruction (ST/SGB/2016/2/Rev.1, ST/SGB/2016/3/Rev.1, ST/SGB/2016/4/Rev.1 and ST/AI/2016/1 and ST/AI/2016/1/Amend.1) (see A/71/557, para. 77).

4. In December 2017, the Secretary-General decided to pause the implementation of the mobility and career development framework, which, according to him, aimed to ensure that the comprehensive review could be undertaken and a recommendation on next steps developed. Consequently, no additional job networks were operationalized in 2018. The Secretary-General indicates that, given that only two job networks were operationalized during the implementation of the framework in 2016 and 2017, the comprehensive review and its findings are limited to the two networks over a two-year period (see A/73/372/Add.2, paras. 2, 3 and 6–8, and ST/SGB/2016/3/Rev.1). **The Advisory Committee notes that as a result of the Secretary-General's decision to pause the implementation of the mobility framework in December 2017, the implementation of the mobility framework covered only two networks over two years (see para. 3 above).**

Implementation update

5. In his fourth annual progress report, the Secretary-General provides an update on the implementation of the mobility framework (the first network, POLNET, in 2016 and 2017 (see A/72/767, sect. II) and the second network, ITECNET, in 2017 (ibid., sect. III)) (see para. 3 above), with information on progress achieved under the two parts of the framework: (a) managed mobility (an internal process for the lateral movement of staff members); and (b) filling of vacancies (the advertisement of existing and anticipated vacant positions, open to all candidates (external and internal)). The report of the Secretary-General also contains information on mobility trends (sect. IV), direct and indirect costs of mobility (sect. V), external recruitment (sect. VI) and five key performance indicators established to assess the achievement of the objectives of the framework (sect. VII).

6. In its resolution 68/265, the General Assembly decided that the number of geographic moves for the job networks in 2016 and 2017 shall be no greater than the average number of geographic moves in those networks in 2014 and 2015. Information on the number of geographic moves for the period from 2012 to 2016 is shown in figures IV and V of the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/767). However, the Secretary-General indicates that the number of geographic moves for 2017 cannot yet be confirmed, since a geographic move is only confirmed after the staff member has remained in the new duty station for a full year (ibid., paras. 26 and 27). **The Advisory Committee notes that, except for 2016, the information contained in figures IV and V of the report of the Secretary-General relates to years prior to the implementation of the mobility framework. The Committee further notes that of the total number of 374 geographic moves reported for 2016 for POLNET in figure IV,[2] only up to 33 such moves were actually taken under managed mobility (lateral moves), the first part of the framework (see para. 5 above and A/72/767, para. 10).**[3]

7. A comparison of average direct costs per person per move from 2011 to 2015 is contained in table 16 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/767). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that this cost data fell outside the time frame for the implementation of the mobility framework. With regard to direct costs

[2] Includes moves for placements from job openings advertised in 2015 before the implementation of the mobility framework.

[3] It remains to be confirmed whether the 33 moves as a result of the 2016 POLNET exercises were initiated in 2016 and lasted more than a year, and would therefore be counted in the annual figures for geographic moves (as those reflected in figure IV).

associated with geographic moves undertaken in 2016, the Secretary-General indicates that, given that the number of moves undertaken could not be confirmed until the end of 2017, an analysis of the related actual costs could not be completed prior to the publication of his report on 27 February 2018. The estimated direct costs for 2016, as shown in table 17 of the report of the Secretary-General, reflect the number of moves in 2016 multiplied by the average costs incurred in 2015 (ibid., para. 38).[4] **The Committee notes that the report of the Secretary-General does not contain information on actual direct and indirect costs arising from the implementation of the mobility framework during 2016 and 2017. The Committee therefore recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to include such information, with a breakdown of the costs incurred for each of the two parts of the framework (managed mobility (lateral moves) and filling of vacancies), in his report on a proposal for a new mobility framework to the Assembly at its seventy-fourth session (see para. 11 below).**

8. Information on external recruitment undertaken through the filling of vacancies, the second part of the framework, is provided in paragraphs 42–44 and table 18 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/767; see also para. 5 above). The average percentage of external appointments to all job opportunities between 2013 and 2017 stood at 30 per cent. The Advisory Committee has made comments and recommendations on matters relating to external recruitment in its most recent report on human resources management (A/73/497).

Comprehensive review

9. Information on the comprehensive review of the mobility framework is provided in section II of the report of the Secretary-General (A/73/372/Add.2), including summary information on the implementation of the framework, the methodology applied in the conduct of the review, key findings identified from the review and lessons learned from the implementation of the mobility framework. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the comprehensive review, conducted between December 2017 and July 2018, has been completed.

10. The Secretary-General indicates that seven key findings have been identified from the review, as follows: mobility remains important for the Organization; one size does not fit all parts of the Secretariat; opportunities for different types of movement are uneven; there were difficulties with matching people and positions; an internal mobility exercise is incompatible with the requirement to advertise all posts externally; burden-sharing was limited; and parts of the process were cumbersome (ibid., paras. 33–54). Ten lessons learned from the implementation of the mobility framework are elaborated in paragraphs 56–65 of the report of the Secretary-General.

11. The Secretary-General further indicates that he will propose a new comprehensive mobility framework for the Secretariat, drawing on the findings of and lessons learned from the comprehensive review. The new mobility system, which will be a core element of the Secretariat-wide approach to talent management, will be fully integrated with career development. It will take into consideration experience elsewhere in the United Nations system and with other partners. The details of this new approach to mobility will be developed in consultation with management and staff during 2019 and will be presented to the General Assembly for consideration at its seventy-fourth session (ibid., paras. 66 and 68).

[4] The expenditures for 2015, reflected in table 15 of the report of the Secretary-General, do not include all costs for the year, since some staff members who moved in 2015 were not paid the mobility allowance until after the year ended and it was not possible to identify all of the one-time costs for the purposes of the report for all entities (see A/72/767, para. 34).

12. The Advisory Committee recalls that it had made comments and recommendations on mobility-related matters prior to the approval of the refined mobility framework by the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session (see A/67/545, sect. III, and A/68/601, sects. III–V). **The Committee trusts that in preparing his proposal for a new mobility framework, the Secretary-General will be fully guided by the relevant provisions of resolutions of the General Assembly, and will also take into account lessons learned from the implementation of the mobility framework during 2016 and 2017.**

Conclusion

13. Actions required of the General Assembly are set out in the reports of the Secretary-General (see A/72/767, para. 53, and A/73/372/Add.2, para. 69). **Subject to its comments and recommendations in the paragraphs above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the reports of the Secretary-General.**